Increase in allocation for NREGS

*136. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the growing popularity of the employment scheme under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Centre has increased allocation for scheme by whopping Rs. 10,500 crores for the current financial year in addition to the budgetary provision of Rs. 16,000 crores;

(b) whether CAG in its report had pointed out that performance of NREGS is not satisfactory;

(c) if so, the steps taken to remove the irregularities pointed out by the CAG; and

(d) other steps and concrete measures taken to implement the scheme so that it benefits the people for which it was introduced?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. NREGA is demand based programme. In the current financial year at B.E. stage, budget provision of Rs. 16000 crore had been made for implementation of the Act. However, in view of the rising labour demand in various States, an additional grant of Rs. 10500 crore has been made available.

(b) On a request made by the Ministry of Rural Development, C and AG conducted performance audit of the implementation of NREGA in 26 States covering 68 district, 141 blocks and 568 Gram Panchayats for the period from February, 2006 to March, 2007. Final audit report of C and AG has been laid on the Table of the House on 24.10.2008.

Findings of CAG as given in its final report relate mainly to issues such as application for employment, issue of dated receipts, job card formats, muster rolls, maintenance of record registers, delayed payment of wages, lack of an effective grievance redressal system, inspection of works, monitoring and shortage of staff with the implementing agencies, expenditure on non-permissible activities/ineligible persons/agencies and incorrect accounting of expenditure.

(c) and (d) CAG report has been shared with the States. At Central level, the Ministry has taken the following steps for smooth and effective implementation of NREG Act.

(i) Generating Awareness

Various steps have been taken to generate awareness about NREGA. Gram Sabhas and one day orientation of all Sarpanches at the Block level have been held. Local vernacular newspapers, radio, TV, films and cultural forms are being used for the purpose. Leaflets and brochures in local language are being provided. Village camps have been organized by the District teams and NGOs and Self help Groups are being associated in the awareness generation.

(ii) Staffing/Training

Capacity building for rural development functionaries and Panchayati Raj functionaries is an essential pre-requisite for better implementation of rural development programmes. NREGA guidelines provide that a dedicated Gram Rozgar Sahayak (GRS) should be appointed in each Gram Panchayat and a dedicated Programme officer should be appointed at Block level for NREGA works besides other technical and non-technical staff. So far 1.92 lakh GRS and 5454 Programme Officers have been recruited. Besides, 23196 technical staff and 12325 other non-technical staff has also been recruited for NREGA. As regards training, 7.19 lakh Panchayati Raj functionaries, 1.64 lakh GRS, 19687 technical staff, 11238 non-technical staff and 6.17 lakh Members of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMC) have been trained under NREGA.

(iii) People's Participation

(a) Village level monitoring committees have been set up and trained.

(b) Non Government Organisations are being involved for awareness generation under NREGA. The Government of India has introduced awards to be known as Rozgar Jagrookta Puraskar (Employment awareness awards) to recognize the outstanding contribution by the civil society organisations for promoting effective implementation of NREGA in different states of the country.

(c) Gram Sabhas are held.

(iv) Vigilance and Monitoring

Implementation of NREG Act is monitored on regular basis. Vigilance and Monitoring Committees have been set up at State as well as district levels. Local MPs are the members of the district Vigilance and Monitoring Committees. Village level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees have also been set up for local monitoring. Members of the Central Employment Guarantee Council undertake field visits to various districts. National level Monitors (NLMs) and Area Officers visit various districts to oversee the progress of the Act. Performance of NREGA is reviewed periodically by Minister (RD) and Secretary (RD) during fortnightly meetings, Performance Review Committee meetings and State specific review meetings.

(v) Transparency

(a) States have been requested to make payment of wages to NREGA workers through their accounts in Post Offices/Banks. So far 4.92 crore Post Office/bank accounts of NREGA workers have been opened.

(b) States have been directed to conduct social audit of each and every work of NREGA within three months. Members of the Central Employment Guarantee Council are actively participating the Social Audit. Social Audit has been done in 1.5 lakh Gram Panchayats.

(c) A comprehensive Web-based MIS www.nrega.nic.in has been implemented which places all data in public domain.

State have been asked to put all Muster Rolls (MR) on the web site of NREGA and make on-line reporting of the MRs verified and works inspected at block and district level. So far, 95.49 lakh MRs have been verified, 2.29 lakh works have been inspected at district level and 14.07 lakh works have been inspected at block level.

(d) A Citizen Information Board has been introduced. This board is to be displayed at all prominent places. This will enable the local community to know the works being undertaken under NREGA and would also facilitate the process of spreading awareness about the programme.

(vi) Grievance redressal mechanism

A grievance redressal mechanism has been set up. A helpline has also been established and made operational in the Ministry to address the public complaints/ grievances and to provide general information about NREGA. States have also been advised to put up their helplines.

Damages due to recent floods in Andhra Pradesh

*137. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been damage to crops due to the recent floods in many States, especially in the coastal areas of East and West Godavari and Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise during the last four years;

(c) the amount of funds allocated and released during the last four years, State-wise; and

(d) the steps Government would take to prevent heavy loss of life and property in such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI V. RADHIKA SELVI): (a) and (b) As per the preliminary information received from Government of Andhra Pradesh, crops over an area 4.26 lakh ha. have been damaged due to heavy rains/floods etc. during August-September, 2008 in 13 districts of the State Including East Godavari and West Godavari.

A statement indicating the State-wise damage to crops due to heavy rains/floods/ landslides etc. during four years *i.e.* 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 is as Statement-I (*See* below).

(c) To ensure ready availability of funds with the States to undertake rescue and relief operations in the wake of natural calamities, a Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) has been constituted for each State, which is contributed by Government of India and the State Government in the ratio of 75:25. An amount of Rs. 16,729.02 crore has been allocated in Calamity Relief Fund